

9/11 Health Bill Passes U.S. House

Wednesday, 29 September 2010

Washington, D.C. - Today, the House of Representatives passed legislation to address the health crisis caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. H.R. 847, the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, will provide health care for those exposed to toxins released by the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. The bill will also reopen the federal Victim Compensation Fund to provide economic relief to those harmed by the attacks.

The bill's passage represents a victory for ailing 9/11 first responders and survivors who have waited nearly nine years for the federal government to approve a comprehensive plan to deal with the public health disaster caused by the attacks. The bill, sponsored by New York Reps. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Peter King (R-NY), and Michael McMahon (D-NY), with the support of the entire New York Congressional delegation, now awaits action in the Senate.

"To the living victims of 9/11, we have good news: help is on the way. Today, the House answered the emergency calls of thousands of ailing 9/11 first responders and survivors," Maloney said. "Our bill provides proper care to those who lost their health because of the 9/11 attacks and demonstrates that we will not abandon those who come to aid of our nation in times of crisis. I thank my good friends Jerry Nadler and Peter King, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, and all our colleagues in the New York delegation for meeting America's moral responsibility to care for those who were harmed by the attacks on our nation."

"Today, Members of the House put aside politics and made history by voting in favor of justice and care for the first responders and survivors of 9/11," said Nadler. "I'm so proud of this victory and moved by the prospect of finally, after nine long years, delivering what thousands of ailing Americans have been waiting for. I want to thank the House Leadership for its genuine support and Congresswoman Maloney for her steady stewardship over the years."

"The passage of H.R. 847 is a victory for the victims of 9/11 and brings us closer to providing police officers, firefighters and construction workers the treatment they need. This measure is long overdue and I will continue to fight to make sure it passes the Senate," King said.

"Finally, after 9 years our heroes will be able to get the health care they desperately need, but more importantly, that they deserve," said Rep. McMahon. "Just as it is important to protect against further terrorist attacks, it is equally important that we ensure the men and women who come to our aid - whether on this soil or overseas - get adequate medical treatment. We can never again wait 9 years to provide those services. I applaud each Member of the House who voted for this bill for finally standing up and saying clearly to our first responders - now it is our turn to help you."

The Zadroga Act is historic, but not unprecedented, legislation. In the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attacks, Congress passed the War Hazards Compensation Act of 1942, which provided health care and financial relief to civilians who helped recover the dead and salvage what remained of our Pacific fleet. In passing the Zadroga Act, Congress has once again demonstrated that our nation will not abandon those harmed by an attack on our shores.

In July, the measure was considered by the House and received 255 votes of support, but did not achieve the high, two-thirds majority required for passage under "suspension of the rules," the parliamentary procedure used to bring the bill to the House floor.

A companion measure, S. 1334, was introduced by Senators Gillibrand, Schumer, Menendez, and Lautenberg in June 2009. The Zadroga Act's \$7.4 billion cost is fully paid-for through revenue offsets.

Fact Sheet on H.R. 847, the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act:

What is the problem?

Thousands of first responders and others exposed to the toxins of Ground Zero are now injured and need our help. These include firefighters, rescue workers, responders, police officers and EMTs, U.S. military personnel, construction workers, cleanup workers, residents, area workers, and schoolchildren, among others. Their illnesses include a range of respiratory, gastrointestinal, and mental health conditions.

To date, an estimated 36,000 Americans have received treatment for 9/11-related illnesses and injuries. Over 53,000 responders are enrolled in medical monitoring. 71,000 individuals are enrolled in the WTC Health Registry, indicating that they were exposed to the toxins.

At least 10,000 people came from around the country to help in the aftermath of the attacks. They hail from every single state in the union and nearly every Congressional district. Many are sick and others are concerned about their future health. (Please click [here](#) for a list of Registry enrollments nationwide and in each congressional district.)

Those who have economic losses because of their 9/11-related illnesses need and deserve compensation, but have no alternative to the current litigation system. The WTC contractors and the City of New York are being sued by over 11,000 people who were injured because of Ground Zero toxins. They face great financial loss because they were asked to help at Ground Zero in the country's time of need.

How does H.R. 847 address the problem?

Provides medical monitoring and treatment to 9/11 responders and survivors (area workers, residents, students, and others) who were exposed to the toxins at Ground Zero.

Builds on the existing monitoring and treatment program by delivering expert medical treatment for these unique exposures at Centers of Excellence.

Reopens the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) to provide compensation for economic losses and harm as an alternative to the current litigation system.

Provides liability protections for the WTC contractors and the City of New York.

More information about H.R. 847:

The cost of the bill is \$7.4 billion and the measure is fully paid-for.

The revenue offset targets "treaty shopping" where a foreign company in a country without a U.S. treaty routes income through a third intermediary company with a treaty to take advantage of the intermediary company's tax reductions.

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